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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600  
16 March 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
16 March 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Results of the US Air Strike on Phu Qui

1. Preliminary analysis of post-strike photography reveals extensive damage at the Phu Qui ammunition depot as a result of the 15 March air strike.

2. Ten buildings were observed burning and 18 others received structural damage. There was a total of 32 ammunition storage and support buildings in the Phu Qui complex.

Communist Military Developments

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4. There is an unconfirmed report from a field photo-interpretation unit that two possible surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites are under construction in North Vietnam near Hanoi. The report is based on continuing analysis of U-2 photography obtained on 14 February. The two installations were reportedly 30 and 50 percent completed at that time and have been tentatively identified as possible SAM positions because of their star-shaped configuration, which is common to many SA-2 sites. In the absence of confirmatory evidence there is still a possibility that these sites are heavy anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) positions.

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6. No Chinese or Soviet military developments that can be directly associated with the Vietnamese situation have been detected during the past 24 hours.

Communist Political Developments

7. Moscow's propaganda reaction to the latest air strike has been relatively mild. Peiping, pressing its propaganda campaign against alleged Soviet brutality in the handling of Chinese students during the 4 March anti-US demonstration in Moscow, has not made a major statement on the two latest strikes.

8. Today's editorial in Hanoi's major party newspaper, characterized the two consecutive air strikes as a "realization of the...plan recently mapped out at Camp David." Noting that yesterday's attack penetrated "deeper into our territory than before," the editorial exhorts the people and the armed forces in the north to "always stand ready... in coordination with the liberation forces in the south" to "defend...the airspace, territorial waters, and territory of our country."

9. Hanoi has also lodged another protest with the ICC, charging that the 15 March air strike was the eighth such violation of DRV territory since early February.

10. [redacted] calling for a termination of North Vietnamese military actions against South Vietnam prior to negotiations go well beyond earlier statements by low-ranking Soviet officials. The [redacted] that USSR was forced to support Hanoi, but it did not want other "parties" which favor war to become directly involved. When asked if the Soviet government would support the Chinese if they should enter the war, the attache stated that Moscow would "do everything possible" to avoid having to make that

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[redacted]

decision. While the [redacted] had the impression that his Soviet colleague was speaking under instructions, these remarks do not represent an authoritative statement of the views of the Soviet Government.

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### South Vietnamese Political Developments

11. Following the weekend coup rumors, Air Vice Marshal Ky has expressed his opposition to further power struggles within the military. I Corps commander General Thi had earlier expressed similar views. Ky, who asserted no coup could succeed against air force opposition, said he was making his views known to other officers and expected no serious move to oust General "Little" Minh as commander-in-chief at the next Armed Forces Council meeting, scheduled for 17 March. Ky attributed the coup rumors largely to retired or outcast officers, such as Colonel Pham Ngoc Thao, or to Viet Cong inspiration.

12. Despite their protestation, Ky and Thi are among the officers considered most likely to maneuver for greater influence in forthcoming Armed Forces Council discussions on possible command changes.

13. General Linh Quang Vien, Minister of Psychological Warfare, in an apparent effort to generate further American support for the retention of General "Little" Minh in his present position, told a US official on 13 March that Minh was doing an excellent job and that he had the confidence of both the President and the Prime Minister. Vien said that although General Thi would like to replace Minh with someone with more popular appeal, Thi probably did not have enough support to do it.

14. Vien also stated that in addition to the three "peace movement" leaders already selected for deportation to North Vietnam, ten others would probably be deported and about 80 would face court action.

### Viet Cong Military Activity

15. The Viet Cong are sustaining their relatively active pace of military activity. A fishing junk was pursued by elements of the South Vietnamese

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[REDACTED]

junk division yesterday off Quang Tri Province just south of the North Vietnam border, and was scuttled by its crew. Six Viet Cong crewmen were captured and three cases of explosives recovered. Efforts are being made to recover additional materiel on board the vessel. The prisoners stated that the junk was one of three which had departed Tiger Island on 12 March.

Cambodia-South Vietnam

16. Cambodia is improving its air defense capability along the South Vietnamese border. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In recent months, Cambodia has organized additional antiaircraft artillery units utilizing the 60-37mm and 8-85mm antiaircraft weapons and associated electronic equipment supplied by the Soviet Union and Communist China. Some of these units have been deployed to border locations and ground observer teams have been organized to report overflights.

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